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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/530,947	04/08/2005	Olli Hyvarinen	4819-4740	2356
27123	7590	09/16/2008		
MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P. 3 WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER NEW YORK, NY 10281-2101				
EXAMINER				
MC GUTHRY BANKS, TIMA MICHELE				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1793				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
09/16/2008		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/530,947

Applicant(s)

HYVARINEN ET AL.

Examiner

TIMA M. MCGUTHRY-BANKS

Art Unit

1793

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 June 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 14, 15 and 17-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 8-13 and 16 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-8508)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

Claims 1-19 are currently amended.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 2-4, 6, 7, 14 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 2-4 lack proper antecedent basis for either a "first" or "second" precipitation step. Claim 1 does not provide for more than one.

Claim 6 reads on adding a solid powder, but there is no teaching of any solution or solvent in Claim 1. Also, applicant claims a "range" of 100 g/L, which is a single value.

Claim 7 recites the limitation "the at least two silver removal stages" in line 3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps include from what is the mercury is removed. Also, it is not clear if the fine-grained copper in this step is the treated copper with the silver amalgam or if this is another source of fine-grained copper.

Claim 14 recites the limitation "the alkali chloride content" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. The chloride is not inherently an alkali composition.

Claim 17 recites the limitation "the at least two silver amalgam precipitation stages" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

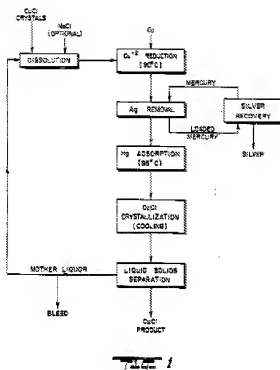
The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 5, 7, 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Peters et al (US 4,124,379).

Peters et al anticipates the claimed invention. Peters et al teaches recovering silver as shown below in Fig. 1:



Regarding precipitating silver amalgam, the metal in the amalgam is replaced with silver, which had previously been in solution and reads on precipitating a silver amalgam. Silver is cemented onto the copper-mercury amalgam (150 mesh), which flows countercurrently (column 4, lines 49-62 and column 5, line 66). The removing, recycling, and treating steps are reflected in Fig. 1. Regarding Claims 5 and 18, the 150 mesh is between 76 and 89 microns. Regarding Claim 7, the recycle step shown in Fig. 1 reads on more than one precipitation stage. Mercury is removed by distillation (column 6, line 18). Regarding Claim 17, copper is added as shown in the figure.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 2-4, 15 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Peter et al.

Peter et al discloses the invention substantially as claimed. Regarding Claims 2-4, Peters et al gives examples of the concentration of silver and mercury obtained in the effluent (Tables 3 and 4) and the percent of silver and mercury amalgam in Table 5. However, Peter et al does not specifically teach the ratio of mercury to silver in the precipitated amalgam. A particular parameter must first be recognized as a result-effective variable, i.e., a variable which achieves a recognized result, before the determination of the optimum or workable ranges of said variable might be characterized as routine experimentation; therefore a *prima facie* case of obviousness exists. See MPEP § 2144.05 II B. Regarding Claims 15 and 19, Peter et al teaches a CuCl concentration of 100 g/L in Table 1, which touches the claimed range. A *prima facie* case of obviousness exists where the claimed ranges and prior art ranges do not overlap but are close enough that one skilled in the art would have expected them to have the same properties. See MPEP § 2144.05 I.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 8-13 and 16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 2-4, 6 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Regarding Claim 6, Peters et al does not teach any concentration of fine-grained copper powder. Regarding Claims 8-14, Peters et al does not disclose or suggest dissolving mercury as mercury chloride and precipitating silver as silver chloride. Regarding Claim 16, Peters et al does not teach the pH of the cuprous chloride solution.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) under Everett in view of Peters et al have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Peters et al alone.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to TIMA M. MCGUTHRY-BANKS whose telephone number is (571)272-2744. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:00 am - 3:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on (571) 272-1244. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Roy King/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit
1793

/T. M. M./
Examiner, Art Unit 1793
12 September 2008